



# ST BENEDICT'S SCHOOL

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## Bursary Policy

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Date:	June 2026
Review Date:	June 2027

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## 1. Introduction

The Governors of St Benedict's are committed to broadening access to the School by offering to eligible parents/guardians of applicants of high potential, means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees. Such support, known as a Bursary award, depends upon the financial, compassionate or other pertinent circumstances of applicants. Bursaries can be awarded up to 100% remission of school fees (excluding extras which are payable in full).

Bursary awards are normally offered on entry to Form 3 (Year 7) and Lower Sixth (Year 12) and are subject to annual testing of parental means and may be varied upwards or downwards, depending on parental circumstances, and the behaviour and academic performance of the award holder. Awards are made on the basis of a family's financial circumstances, (e.g. their savings, investments and realisable assets, as well as their income, the size of their family, any other persons dependent upon them and like factors). As a selective school, given that we have many more bursary applications which would meet the means-testing criteria, than we are able to grant we prioritise pupils who have been awarded scholarships to the school (academic, art, drama, music or sport) and/or who have achieved highly in the entrance examinations.

In addition to our regular bursary awards there are a limited number of St Anselm Awards for entry to Form 3 (Year 7). These are special awards for exceptional pupils and cover fees, uniform and music tuition. Further means-tested assistance may also be available to cover other costs, such as transport, lunches and some trips. Consideration for St Anselm Awards will be given to families with a combined annual income of not more than £90,000. Please find further information about the St Anselm Awards on the School website.

Requests for bursary support usually fall into two categories:

- New applicants to the School, where a place has been offered but parents/guardians are unable to fund the tuition fees.
- Existing pupils where a change in parents/guardians' circumstances has resulted in difficulty in meeting tuition fees and may result in the child being withdrawn part way through a stage of education. Temporary support can be awarded in these circumstances, known as a Hardship award.

**Unfortunately, the bursary fund is limited so we are unable to provide a bursary to everyone who applies even if they have achieved a scholarship in the entrance assessments or have a very low income.**

## 2. New Applicants to the School

### 2.1 Awareness

Information provided by the School alerting parents of potential applicants to the possibility of gaining means-tested financial support with the payment of school fees is included in:

- The School website
- The Admissions Information document
- Open Mornings

### 2.2 The Application Process

Bursaries may be made available to parents of children entering St Benedict's School. They are awarded at the discretion of the Bursary Committee, and the Board of Governors.

**Step One:** Parents interested in applying for a bursary should complete the initial bursary enquiry form available from the school website. Additionally, completion of the online registration form and payment of the registration fee must be made for the bursary application to be valid.

Late applications for bursaries will not be considered after the published registration closing dates (usually falling in the prior November to year of entry) For queries relating to the bursary process, parents should contact [bursaries@stbenedicts.org.uk](mailto:bursaries@stbenedicts.org.uk).

- **Step Two.** Once the assessments have taken place. Those shortlisted for a bursary will be invited to email [bursaries@stbenedicts.org.uk](mailto:bursaries@stbenedicts.org.uk) to request to be set up on the online bursary application system and complete the full application which will include a more detailed financial review. The School works with an external partner (Bursary Administration Ltd) BAL, who may contact parents to discuss the application in full details. Parents are advised of this potential referral at the initial enquiry stage.
- **Step Three.** The Bursary Committee assesses all applications in order to establish the likely level of support which will be required in order to allow the child to attend the School. This may involve the Bursar, or her representative, visiting the parents/guardians' home to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted and the basis of the financial assessment has been fair.
- **Step Four.** A recommendation is agreed by the Bursary Committee.
- **Step Five.** Parents are advised whether their child is to be offered a place at the School and of the Bursary offer, if any, is to be made, at a date set annually by the North London Consortium, of which the School is a part. This is usually the middle of February of the year of entry to the School.
- **Step Six.** Parents are then required to sign an Acceptance Form accepting the place at the School and the conditions of the bursary.

### 2.3 The Case for Assistance

The Bursary Committee will consider a number of factors when making the judgement as to the justification for support, and the extent of such support. In the main, the child's suitability for the School is the first consideration in granting support.

- **Suitability.** In assessing a child's suitability, attention will be given to the academic assessment result of each applicant, but potential in other areas such as music or sport will also be considered, as well as actual achievement. Bursary funds are limited and those judged most suitable will be given priority as those likely to gain most from the educational provision, including those who have already been awarded Scholarships in any discipline. Each pupil to whom support is offered must, in the opinion of the Head, be likely to make sound academic progress following admission and possess the potential to develop the quality of his or her work, and benefit from participation in the wider, co-curricular activities on offer at the School. In normal circumstances, each applicant should meet the School's academic requirements. Consideration will also be given to the child's performance during their interview or group assessment, should the applicant be selected for one, as part of the general application process. A reference from the child's current school will be consulted for evidence of a good academic track record and general behaviour and contribution to school life.
- **Financial Limitations.** The amount of the bursary award is based upon the extent of the family's financial need. Each case is assessed on its own merits and awards are made accordingly, subject to the School's ability to fund these within the context of its overall provision for bursaries. It is recognised that judgements about what sacrifices a family should make to pay school fees will be personal. However, the School has a duty to ensure that all bursaries are awarded appropriately and so, as well as current earnings, other factors which will be considered in determining the necessary level of award will include:

- The ability to improve the financial position or earning power of the family. For example, where there are two partners, both would be expected to be employed unless one is prevented from doing so through incapacity, or the requirements of their partner's work.
- Opportunities to release any capital. Significant capital savings and investments would be expected to be used for the payment of school fees, as would equity value in houses.
- In cases of separation, the contribution and potential contribution made by the parent with whom the child does not live the school will expect both parents to disclose their financial information during the application process.
- Contribution to household costs by other, wider, family members, any adults unrelated to the child or by outside sources.
- Where fees are being paid to other schools (or universities), the School's grant will take into account all these outgoings.
- Acknowledging that others might have a different view, the School considers that, *inter alia* the following would not be consistent with the receipt of a bursary:
  - Second property/land holdings
  - Frequent or expensive holidays
  - New or luxury cars
  - Investment in significant home improvements

Other Factors: It is recognised that, in addition to academic ability and financial constraints, there may be other circumstances which should be considered. These include:

- Where a child has siblings at the School
- Where the social needs of the child are relevant
- Where a parent/guardian is terminally ill or, because of poor health, is unable to secure permanent employment

#### 2.4 Existing Pupils - Change in Family Circumstances

Within overall budget funding, the School will in normal circumstances set aside each year a Hardship Fund, for cases of sudden, unforeseen need. Parents with a child at the School whose financial circumstances suddenly change may apply for a temporary Hardship Award to the Bursar, explaining their situation. Such awards are made in a timely way by the Bursary Committee and subject to the availability of funding and cannot be guaranteed.

### 3. Annual Review

All bursary awards are subject to annual testing of parental means and may be varied upwards or downwards depending on parental circumstances. Current bursary holders will be issued with repeat means-testing forms each year.

**For those previously in receipt of bursaries, the Headmaster and Bursar have the discretion to recommend the reduction or withdrawal of an award not only where a pupil's academic progress, attitude or behaviour has been unsatisfactory, but also where the parents/guardians have failed to support the School, for example by the late payment of any contribution they are making to the fees or extra charges.**

### 4. Confidentiality

The School respects the confidentiality of bursary awards made to families and recipients are expected to do likewise.

**5. Other Sources of Bursary Assistance**

In addition to the School's Bursary Fund, there are a number of educational and charitable trusts which provide assistance with tuition fees. In the majority of cases, these are to assist children who are already attending a fee-paying school and due to a change of circumstances may be unable to remain. St Benedict's encourages parents/guardians to apply for support where it is felt a good case can be made for assistance.